



New England Agricultural Statistics Service

a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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USDA TO FORECAST 2000 WILD BLUEBERRY CROP

The 1999 Wild Blueberry crop in Maine weighed in at 65.9 million pounds, 5 percent above 1998's output but 11 percent below 1997. Berry plants are in excellent to good condition as of April 30, 2000. Rainfall thus far this spring has been greater than normal. Operators have been applying fungicides for mummyberry disease, pruning fields by mowing and burning, and applying pre-emergence herbicides.

With unknowns such as pollination conditions and erratic weather, there is always uncertainty about the size of this year's crop. To help the industry prepare for the upcoming crop, USDA publishes an annual forecast of Maine wild blueberry production every July. This study is requested and funded by the Maine State Department of Agriculture, Food & Rural Resources. It is administered by the New England field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The Wild Blueberry Growers Survey is the only chance to officially forecast production for the 2000 crop. More than 500 Maine growers are asked for their help in this effort to forecast production and measure the final price received for last year's crop. The survey is mailed in mid June and non respondents are called in early July. As with all our survey work, individual operator information is kept strictly confidential and is even exempt from requests under the Freedom of Information Act. The individual reports are only used in combination to generate wild blueberry statistics for Maine.

The wild blueberry production forecast is released in the *Maine Wild Blueberry* report from the New England Agricultural Statistics Service at the end of July. This report is available on the Internet, but complimentary copies are also mailed to survey participants upon request.

[The New England Agricultural Statistics Service is a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. It is located in Concord, NH, and is responsible for agricultural statistics in all six states in the region. The office can be reached at 1-800-642-9571 or through e-mail at NASS-NH@NASS.USDA.GOV. All national statistics and state level newsletters are available through free e-mail subscriptions and on the Internet at www.usda.gov/nass/.]

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